

## Hearing on Social Security at 75 years: More Necessary Now than Ever

On behalf of the more than 100,000 members of the Illinois Education Association who are participants or annuitants in our pension plans which do not include mandatory Social Security participation, I wish to plead with you to do something about the extremely unfair negative consequences of the Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Provisions.

These provisions unfairly punish many good hard working public servants who end up being denied benefits to which they otherwise are entitled including surviving spouses who are often shocked to learn what this means to them.

This is also a serious problem and significant disincentive to those considering a move into teaching in mid career after years of employment in the private sector. I cannot tell you how many times someone has become a teacher in our state and then, LATER, learned about GPO/WEP and are stunned by the diminution of their retirement income this creates.

For those who have qualified for Social Security through other employment outside of teaching, the current provisions in essence punish them for having been industrious enough to have earned significant income outside their teaching employment.

I cannot possibly overstate the sense of urgency felt by my membership that the Congress should act quickly to undo this injustice. The quality of life diminution this creates for thousands and thousands of our members and millions of others across the country should be corrected and corrected now.

Just put yourself in the shoes of that newly widowed spouse of a retiree who learns that the spousal benefit she always assumed would be there for her is not and the only reason it isn't is because her husband at some point in his life left the private sector and finished his working years in a classroom. The shame of that reality is on those who have failed to right this wrong.

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